Table of Metrical Tests Applied to Shakespeare's Plays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Play</th>
<th>No. of Lines</th>
<th>Prose</th>
<th>Blank Verse</th>
<th>5-Foot Rhymes</th>
<th>Run-on Lines %</th>
<th>Double Endings %</th>
<th>Speech Ending %</th>
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Stratford, Shakespeare uses figures of speech for decoration and amplification in his early style, and learns only gradually to integrate these figures into a presentation of theme, subject, and individual character. In Shakespeare's later work, simile is often transformed into metaphor, and assumes an organic function in relation to the entire play.

The Periods of Shakespeare's Creativity

Critics once spoke of the periods of Shakespeare's creative life in biographical terms, as in Edward Dowden's fanciful evocation of the experimental years "In the Workshop" (1590–1594), the years of happy success at writing comedy and history "In the World" (1595–1601), the tragic period "De Profundis" or "Out of the Depths" (1602–1608), and the final years of serene resignation "On the Heights" (1608–1612). Such implicitly biographical explanations are now regarded with great skepticism. Still, most critics would agree that Shakespeare developed from phase to phase with extraordinary artistic consistency. Although we talk now in terms of genres rather than of Shakespeare's changing spiritual mood,
Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?
Ros. Madam, it fell out, that certain players
We o'er-ran the way: of these we told him;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: they are here about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true:
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclin'd.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose into these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia:
Her father and myself, lawful espials,
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behav'd,
If 't be th' affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you,
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may. [Exit Queen.]

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. [To Ophelia Read on this book;
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this—
"Too much prov'd"—that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. [Aside.] O, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautified with priest's ring art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word:
O heavy burthen!

Pol. I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.[Exeunt King and Polonius.]
Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce with than honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thought to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where 's your father?

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in his own house. Farewell.

Oph. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. O heavenly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp; you name-nick God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on 't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriage: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are.

To a nunnery, go.

Exit. [Scene II. A hall in the castle.]

Enter Hamlet and three of the Players.

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquit and begot a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwinkle fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

First Play. I warrant your honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'er-step not the modesty of nature: for any course with. 110. commerce, intercourse. 115. the time, the present age. 119. indolent, shiftless. 120. but . . . i.e., that we do not still have about us a taste of the old stock. 150. reigne, reign. 154. monsters, a translation of the horns of a coxcomb. 148. the, the, the, the. 166. expectancie and rose, sources of hope. 161. the glass, all the mirror of fashion and the pattern of courtly behavior. 162. observ'd, observ'd, i.e., the center of attention in the court. 167. blozen, bloomed.

T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Enter King and Polonius.

King. Love! his affections do not that way tend; 116

Nor what he spoke, though it lack'd form little, 117

Was not like madness. There's something in his soul, 118

O'er which his melancholy sits on brood; 119

And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose 120

Will be some danger; which for to prevent, 121

I have in quick determination 122

Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England, 123

For the demand of our neglected tribute: 124

Haply the seas and countries different 125

With variable objects shall expel 126

This something-settled matter in his heart, 127

Whereon his brains still being butts pilgrims thus 128

From fashion of himself. What think you on 't? 129

Pol. It shall do well; but yet do I believe 130

The origin and commencement of his grief 131

Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia! 132

You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said; 133

We heard it all. My lord, do as you please; 134

But, if you hold it fit, after the play 135

Let his queen mother all alone entreat him 136

To show his grief: let her be round with him; 137

And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear 138

Of all their conference. If she find him not, 139

To England send him, or confine him where 140

Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so:

Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. Exeunt. 141

Hamlet. ACT III: SC II

[Scene II. A hall in the castle.]

Enter Hamlet and three of the Players.

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquit and begot a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwinkle fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

First Play. I warrant your honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'er-step not the modesty of nature: for any
Marat, wrapped in a white sheet and accompanied by Simone, is led to the bath.
Corday, sunk into herself, is taken to a bench by two sisters.
Dufferet, Roux and the Four Singers take up their positions as Coulmier reaches the stage. The Herald stands in the middle of the stage. Sade stands near his raised chair. The tolling of the bell ceases.
The procession moves towards the acting area.
Coulmier enters the acting area.
The Patients in the background stand tensely. One of them adopts an eccentric pose, another comes slowly forward with outstretched arms.
FANFARE.

2. PROLOGUE

Coulmier: As Director of the Clinic of Charenton
I would like to welcome you to this salon
To one of our residents a vote
of thanks is due Monsieur de Sade who wrote
and has produced this play for your delectation
and for our patients’ rehabilitation
We ask your kindly indulgence for
a cast never on stage before
coming to Charenton But each inmate
I can assure you will try to pull his weight
We’re modern enlightened and we don’t agree
with locking up patients We prefer therapy
through education and especially art
so that our hospital may play its part
faithfully following according to our lights
the Declaration of Human Rights
I agree with our author Monsieur de Sade
that his play set in our modern bath house
won’t be marred

by all these instruments for mental and physical hygiene
Quito on the contrary they set the scene
For in Monsieur de Sade’s play he has tried
to show how Jean-Paul Marat died
and how he waited in his bath before
Charlotte Corday came knocking at his door

3. PREPARATION

Herald knocks three times with his staff and gives the orchestra a sign.
Ceremonious music begins.
Coulmier moves to his Family.
Sade mounts his dais.
Marat is placed in his bath. Simone puts his bandage straight.
The Sisters arrange Corday’s costume.
The Group assumes the pose of a heroic tableau.

4. PRESENTATION

The music stops.

[Herald knocks three times with his staff]

Herald: Already seated in his place
here is Marat observe his face
[points his staff at Marat]
Fifty years old and not yet dead
he wears a bandage around his head
[points staff at bandage]
His flesh burns it is yellow as cheese
[points at his neck]
because disfigured by a skin disease
And only water cooling every limb
[points to bath]
prevents his fever from consuming him
NIGHT SCENE AT GRETCHEN'S DOOR

VALENTINE:
When I was at some drinking bout
Where big talk tends to blossom out,
And my companions raised their voice
To praise the maidens of their choice
And drowned their praises in their drink,
Then I would sit and never blink,
Proped on my elbow listening
To all their brags and blustering.
Then smiling I would stroke my beard
And raise the bumber in my hand
And say: 'Each fellow to his taste!
But is there one in all the land
To hold a candle to my own
Dear sister, Gretchen? No, there's none!
Hear! Hear! Kling! Klang! It went around;
Some cried: 'His judgment is quite sound,
She is the pearl of womanhood!'
That shut those boasters up for good.
And now! It would make one tear one's hair
And run up walls in one's despair!
Each filthy fellow in the place
Can sneer and jeer at my disgrace!
And I, like a man who's deep in debt,
Every chance word must make me sweat.
I could smash their heads for them if I tried—
I could not tell them that they lied.

(Faust and Mephistopheles enter)

VALENTINE:
Who comes there, slinking? Who comes there?
If I mistake not, they're a pair.
If it's he, I'll scrag him on the spot;
He'll be dead before he knows what's what!
Take a friend's advice. Leave well alone,
Or your goose may be cooked and eaten to the bone.

_Thomas_

You come twenty years too late.

_Tempter_

Then I leave you to your fate.
I leave you to the pleasures of your higher vices,
Which will have to be paid for at higher prices.
Farewell, my Lord, I do not wait upon ceremony,
I leave as I came, forgetting all acrimony,
Hoping that your present gravity
Will find excuse for my humble levity.
If you will remember me, my Lord, at your prayers,
I'll remember you at kissing-time below the stairs.

_Thomas_

Leave-well-alone, the springtime fancy,
So one thought goes whistling down the wind.
The impossible is still temptation.

_The impossible, the undesirable,
Voices under sleep, waking a dead world,
So that the mind may not be whole in the present._

[Enter Second Tempter.]

_Second Tempter_

Your Lordship has forgotten me, perhaps. I will remind you.
We met at Clarendon, at Northampton,
And last at Montmirail, in Maine. Now that I have recalled them,
Some glory clings to all that Heaven has made;
In you, all Heaven's marvels are displayed.
On that fair face, such beauties have been lavished,
The eyes are dazzled and the heart is ravished;
How could I look on you, O flawless creature,
And not adore the Author of all Nature,
Feeling a love both passionate and pure
For you, his triumph of self-portraiture?
At first, I trembled lest that love should be
A subtile snare that Hell had laid for me;
I vowed to flee the sight of you, eschewing
A rapture that might prove my soul's undoing;
But soon, fair being, I became aware
That my deep passion could be made to square
With rectitude, and with my bounden duty.
I thereupon surrendered to your beauty.
It is, I know, presumptuous on my part
To bring you this poor offering of my heart,
And it is not my merit, Heaven knows,
But your compassion on which my hopes repose.
You are my peace, my solace, my salvation;
On you depends my bliss—or desolation;
I bide your judgment and, as you think best,
I shall be either miserable or blest.

ELMIRE

Your declaration is most gallant, Sir,
But don't you think it's out of character?
You'd have done better to restrain your passion
And think before you spoke in such a fashion.
It ill becomes a pious man like you . . .

TARTUFFE

I may be pious, but I'm human too:
With your celestial charms before his eyes,
A man has not the power to be wise.
I know such words sound strangely, coming from me,
But I'm no angel, nor was meant to be,
And if you blame my passion, you must needs
Reproach as well the charms on which it feeds.
Your loveliness I had no sooner seen
Than you became my soul's unrivalled queen;
Before your seraph glance, divinely sweet,
My heart's defenses crumbled in defeat,
And nothing fasting, prayer, or tears might do
Could stay my spirit from adoring you.
My eyes, my sighs have told you in the past
What now my lips make bold to say at last,
And if, in your great goodness, you will deign
To look upon your slave, and ease his pain,—
If, in compassion for my soul's distress,
You'll stoop to comfort my unworthiness,
I'll raise to you, in thanks for that sweet manna,
An endless hymn, an infinite hosanna.
With me, of course, there need be no anxiety,
No fear of scandal or of notoriety.
These young court gallants, whom all the ladies fancy,
Are vain in speech, in action rash and chancy;
When they succeed in love, the world soon knows it;
No favor's granted them but they disclose it
And by the looseness of their tongues profane
The very altar where their hearts have lain.
TARTUFFE. I do far less for you than you deserve.

ELMIRE. I wanted to speak to you in private on a certain matter. I'm pleased that no one can overhear us.

TARTUFFE. I too am delighted. I need hardly say how pleased I am to find myself alone with you. It's an opportunity which I have besought Heaven to accord me — vainly until this moment.

ELMIRE. What I want is that you should speak frankly and conceal nothing from me.

TARTUFFE. And my sole desire is that you should accord me the singular favour of allowing me to express all that is in my heart and assure you that anything I have said against those who were paying homage to your charms was not spoken in malice against you but rather that the intensity of my pious zeal and pure...

ELMIRE. I take it in that sense and believe that it arises from your concern for my salvation.

TARTUFFE. That is indeed so, madam, and such is the fervour of my... [Squeezing her fingers.]

ELMIRE. Oh! You're hurting me...

TARTUFFE. It comes from excess of devotion. I never intended to hurt you. [Putting his hand upon her knee.] I would rather...

ELMIRE. What is your hand doing there?

TARTUFFE. I'm feeling your dress. How soft the material is!

ELMIRE. Please don't! I'm dreadfully ticklish. [She pushes back her chair. TARTUFFE brings his closer.]

TARTUFFE. What marvellous lace! They do wonderful work nowadays. Things are so much better made than they used to be.

ELMIRE. Very true, but let us return to our business. They say my husband intends to break his promise to Valère and give his daughter to you. Tell me, is it true?

TARTUFFE. He did mention something about it, but to tell the truth, madam, that isn't the happiness I aspire to. All my hopes of felicity lie in another direction.

ELMIRE. That's because you have no interest in temporal things.

TARTUFFE. My breast does not enclose a heart of flint!

ELMIRE. I'm sure your thoughts are all turned Heavenward. Your desires are not concerned with anything here below.

TARTUFFE. A passion for the beauties which are eternal does not preclude a temporal love. Our senses can and do respond to those most perfect works of Heaven's creation, whose charms are exemplified in beings such as you and embodied in rarest measure in yourself. Heaven has lavished upon you a beauty that dazzles the eyes and moves the hearts of men. I never look upon your flawless perfections without adoring in you the great Author of all nature and feeling my heart filled with ardent love for that fair form in which He has portrayed Himself. At first I feared lest this secret passion which consumes me might be some subtle snare of the accursed one. I even resolved to avoid your sight, believing you to be an obstacle to my salvation; but at length I came to realize, 0 fairest among women, that there need be nothing culpable in my passion and that I could reconcile it with virtue. Since then I have surrendered to it heart and soul. It is, I admit, no small presumption on my part to address to you this offer of my love, but I rely upon your generosity and in no wise upon my own unworthy self: my hopes, my happiness, my peace are in your keeping: on you my bliss or future misery depends: my future hangs on your decree: make me for ever happy if such be your will, wretched if you would have it so.

ELMIRE. A very gallant declaration but a little surprising I must confess! It seems to me you ought to steel yourself more firmly against temptation and consider more deeply what you are about. A pious man like you, a holy man whom everyone...

TARTUFFE. Ah! But I'm not less a man for being devout! Confronted by your celestial beauty one can but let love have its way and make no demur. I realize that such a declaration coming from me may well seem strange but, after all, madam, I'm not an angel. If you condemn this declaration of mine you must lay the blame on your own
LOIS SPEARS

Here lies the body of Lois Spears,
Born Lois Fluke, daughter of Willard Fluke,
Wife of Cyrus Spears,
Mother of Myrtle and Virgil Spears,
Children with clear eyes and sound limbs—
(I was born blind).
I was the happiest of women
As wife, mother and housekeeper,
Caring for my loved ones,
And making my home
A place of order and bounteous hospitality:
For I went about the rooms,
And about the garden
With an instinct as sure as sight,
As though there were eyes in my finger tips—
Glory to God in the highest.

JUSTICE ARNETT

It is true, fellow citizens,
That my old docket lying there for years
On a shelf above my head and over
The seat of justice, I say it is true
That docket had an iron rim
Which gashed my baldness when it fell—
(Somehow I think it was shaken loose
By the heave of the air all over town
When the gasoline tank at the canning works
Blew up and burned Butch Weldy)—
But let us argue points in order,
And reason the whole case carefully:
First I concede my head was cut,
But second the frightful thing was this:
The leaves of the docket shot and showered
Around me like a deck of cards
In the hands of a sleight of hand performer.
And up to the end I saw those leaves
Till I said at last, "Those are not leaves,
Why, can't you see they are days and days
And the days and days of seventy years?
And why do you torture me with leaves
And the little entries on them?"